

Message Text

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ACTION INR-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 5640

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, RO, IR
SUBJECT: NEW ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR TO IRAN: NICOLAE STEFAN

1. OFFICIAL RCP DAILY SCINTEIA AUGUST 8 ANNOUNCED THAT FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE, NICOLAE STEFAN, WILL REPLACE ALEXANDRU BOABA AS ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR TO IRAN. STEFAN--PURPORTEDLY AN OLD PERSONAL FRIEND OF PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU--IS FAIRLY-WELL AND FAVORABLY KNOWN TO EMBASSY. FOR A GOVERNMENT WITH MORE THAN 100 AMBASSADORS ACCREDITED IN FOREIGN CAPITALS--AMONG WHOM ARE NUMEROUS NON-ENTITIES--APPOINTMENT OF A MAN OF STEFAN'S CALIBRE AND CONNECTIONS IS A CLEAR SIGN OF SUBSTANTIVE IMPORTANCE GOR ATTACHES TO ITS RELATIONS WITH IRAN AND WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE THAT IRAN FIGURES LARGE IN GOR PLANS IN FIELD OF FOREIGN TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION. WE EXPECT THAT STEFAN WILL PROVE TO BE BOTH CAPABLE AND CONGENIAL DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUE. THERE HAS BEEN NO MENTION OF HIS SUCCEEDING BOABA AS AMBASSADOR TO AFGHANISTAN OR OMAN.

2. STEFAN HAD SPENT 20 YEARS IN AGRICULTURE BEFORE MOVING TO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE IN JANUARY 1975. BY 1962 HE HELD RANK OF DIRECTOR GENERAL IN MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY, WHERE HE WAS IN CHARGE OF DIVISION OF HORTICULTURE, RESPONSIBLE FOR COOPERATIVE AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT.

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3. AS FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE RESPONSIBLE FOR FOREIGN ECONOMIC COOPERATION, STEFAN WAS CHIEF OF GOR DELEGATION FOR THE PREPARATORY TALKS PRECEEDING SECOND SESSION OF U.S.-ROMANIAN JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION IN WASHINGTON IN FALL OF 1975. HE WAS ALSO INVOLVED IN NEGOTIATIONS IN SPRING OF 1976 ON THE LONG TERM U.S.-ROMANIAN

ECONOMIC COOPERATION AGREEMENT, IN WHICH HE PROVED HELPFUL, EFFECTIVE AND CONGENIAL. DURING THE JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION MEETING IN BUCHAREST IN FALL OF 1976 (THE RICHARDSON NEGOTIATIONS), STEFAN HEADED NEGOTIATING TEAM THAT DEALT WITH MOST OF SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES. ALTHOUGH HE HAD NOT MADE A GOOD IMPRESSION IN HIS FIRST EXPOSURE TO AMERICANS, HE ADJUSTED RAPIDLY AND CAME TO BE WELL-REGARDED BY US NEGOTIATORS AT ALL LEVELS. HIS ROLE IN U.S.-GOR NEGOTIATIONS WAS DESCRIBED AT TIME AS "EXPEDITING DISCUSSIONS OF COOPERATION PROJECTS WITH US FIRMS, AT WHICH HE SHOWED CONSIDERABLE TACT AND FLEXIBILITY." HE HAD BEEN CHARACTERIZED AS INFORMAL AND FRIENDLY EVEN TOWARD WORKING-LEVEL CONTACTS--AN UNCOMMON TRAIT AT HIS LEVEL IN PROTOCOL CONSCIOUS GOR OFFICIALDOM.

4. U.S. CONTACTS WITH STEFAN HAVE BEEN LESS FREQUENT SINCE 1976, AND HE IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN CONCENTRATING ON DEVELOPMENT OF ROMANIAN ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH AFRICA. HE ACCOMPANIED PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU ON THE WEST AFRICAN TRIP THAT WAS CUT SHORT BY THE MARCH 4, 1977 EARTHQUAKE.

5. UNLIKE MOST HIGH GOR OFFICIALS, STEFAN HAS APPARENTLY NOT SERVED IN ANY CAPACITY ON STAFF OF PARTY SECRETARIAT. HIS PARTY STANDING, HOWEVER, IS CLEARLY HIGH, FOR HE WAS AN ALTERNATE MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE FROM AUGUST 1969
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UNTIL HIS APPOINTMENT IN NOVEMBER 1974 TO PARTY'S CENTRAL AUDITING COMMISSION, MEMBERSHIP ON WHICH REQUIRES THAT OTHER PARTY POSTS BE RELINQUISHED.

6. STEFAN WAS BORN IN DECEMBER 1923 IN ROMANIAN OIL CENTER OF PLOIESTI BUT, WITH PREMATURELY WHITE HAIR, HE APPEARS SOMEWHAT OLDER THAN HIS 54 YEARS. NEVERTHELESS, HIS APPEARANCE IS HEALTHY AND HIS MANNER ENERGETIC. HE IS BELIEVED TO SPEAK FRENCH AND TO UNDERSTAND CONSIDERABLE ENGLISH, ALTHOUGH HE SPEAKS IT ONLY HALTINGLY. MRS. STEFAN, ALSO AN AGRICULTURALIST, IS DESCRIBED BOTH BY AMERICAN OFFICIAL AND BY AN ARISTOCRATIC ROMANIAN LADY AS ATTRACTIVE AND CHARMING. THE LATTER--A LINGUIST HERSELF--DOUBTS THAT MRS. STEFAN SPEAKS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, BUT ADDS THAT SHE SEEMS THE TYPE OF PERSON WHO COULD AND WOULD QUICKLY LEARN ONE IF THERE WERE A REASON TO DO SO.
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Message Attributes

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